

MEETING SUMMARY

Focus Macomb Quality of Life Committee

**Macomb County Administration Building
One South Main Street ~ 9th Floor Conference Room
Mount Clemens, Michigan**

July 25, 2006

Members Present:

Karen Parteau, Marketing, Health Alliance Plan
Ameldia Brown, Director, Faith & Community Health, St. Joseph Hospital
Tony Comito, TACOM, National Automotive Center
Ken DeCock, Co-owner, Boyka's Farm Market
Larry Garrisi, President, Sunshine Homes
Arthur Mullen, Director, Mount Clemens DDA
Roy Rose, President, Anderson, Eckstein and Westrick ~ Focus Macomb Co-Chair

Macomb County Planning and Economic Development Staff Present:

Michael Rozny, Program Manager, Community Development Services ~ Quality of Life Staff Advisor
Maria Zardis, Grants Coordinator

Members Not Present:

Paul Socia, President, Citizens State Bank ~ Co-Chair, Quality of Life Committee
James Flom, President, Thunder Bay Pattern Works
Tom Guastello, President, Center Management
James Kaye, President and CEO, Macomb Community Bank
Scott Kowalkowski, Business Development, Colasanti Group
Karl Oskoian, Director, Communications and Public Relations, General Dynamics Land Systems
Dana Peterson, Founding Director, Director of Fund Development, CARE House
Jon Peterson, External Affairs Director, AT&T
Guy Rizzo, President, GTR Builders
Jim Safian, President, Premier Financial Credit Union
Mounir Sharobeem, President Emeritus, Judson Center
Grace Shore, President, Central Macomb Chamber of Commerce

Guest Speakers:

I.J. Campbell, Community Development Administrator, City of Roseville
Joie West, St. Joseph Healthcare

THE MEETING WAS BROUGHT TO ORDER AT 7:35 A.M. by Co-Chair Karen Parenteau, who welcomed the members of the committee and the guest speakers, I.J. Campbell and Joie West. Mike Rozny then reviewed the eight priorities identified as possible focus areas by the committee at the first two meetings, touching on the process members could use to define their goals. He reminded the members that when the committee began, we had to define the broad spectrum of Quality of Life issues to reflect the mission of Focus Macomb ~ "To support a renewed and robust economy." In Macomb County our recreational opportunities, good schools, proximity to markets, and proximity to Canada, attracts new business and retains those businesses already in the County.

Therefore, our charge - to develop feasible recommendations to present to the Board of Commissioners at the November 22nd Board Meeting – is *very* important to economic development.

PRESENTATION BY I.J. CAMPBELL

As the Community Development Administrator for the City of Roseville, Mr. Campbell addressed the sociological issues facing the County as our population increases across all economic strata. He voiced concern for the challenges faced by the underemployed, workers in lower paying service positions and families in crisis. The committee learned that those with the lowest paying jobs are actually the employees who provide the majority of services in our successful retail businesses -- retail being the second largest industry supplying jobs in the County. The challenges to this group of people, is affordable housing, quality daycare and transportation. Many of those workers cannot afford to live in the County and must use public transportation requiring them to spend 1-1/2 to 2 hours traveling to work. The SMART transportation system is their primary link to employment and must be expanded. We also learned Macomb County has the second highest number of children in the State of Michigan removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect. The Cities of Warren and Roseville have the highest and second highest number of children, and their families, in distress. The Michigan Department of Human Services has targeted these two communities for redeveloping community support of the family structure.

Mr. Campbell also reminded us of our *strengths*. We have a strong foundation and reputation as hard-working people of bedroom communities with most families having strong ties to each other and their community. He asked the members to remember the last time they visited one of our parks or Metro Beach and noticed how many families, from our multitude of diverse cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, were enjoying family reunions, picnics and other recreational activities. Members of the committee agreed and voiced support for exploring the possibility of the County acquiring more recreational land for its residents.

He concluded his presentation by saying, Macomb County should focus on becoming itself. “We are not Oakland County.” This means, “Concentrate on our strengths, and define and do what we do best (in Macomb County).” He pointed out that one of the areas dominant and unique to our County is Lake St. Clair and the Clinton River. He reminded the committee, residents of Warren are only twelve miles from lake. As he said, “This is our shining jewel – accessible to people of all economic structure or ethnic group and a place we can all enjoy.”

PRESENTATION BY JOIE WEST

Ms. West, of St. Joseph Healthcare elaborated further on quality of life issues. As a member of *Creating a Healthier Macomb* since 1992, she is well versed in social issues, challenges and progress made for the benefit of County residents. Similar to Focus Macomb, Healthier Macomb was formed to improve the quality of life with its primary agenda addressing social/health issues. To do so, Healthier Macomb committees soon realized they had to address the challenges residents face on daily life. She explained those challenges identified by Healthier Macomb correlate with the four committees of Focus Macomb: Education and Workforce Development, Business Development, Transportation and Quality of Life.

Healthier Macomb divided into subcommittees which set goals to address seven areas of *vision* and set fifty attainable long-lasting goals. All of the original seven vision areas have seen activity. The areas addressed were: the abuse and neglect of children, adult literacy (50% of County residents are still functionally illiterate; 20% are considered illiterate), affordable housing, substance abuse in adults and minors, bike and skate safety, cancer (lung, breast, cervical and colo-rectal screening), community safety programs, cultural activities, depression, domestic violence, drinking and driving, food protection, health education, heart disease, HIV/AIDS education, childhood immunization, flu immunization, living and dying support services (hospice), programs for new parents, senior independence, physical fitness for adults and children, prenatal care, retirement planning,

school breakfast programs, school-to-work programs, spiritual health, suicide prevention, tobacco use during pregnancy, violence prevention education, water quality, and worksite wellness.

An open discussion followed with Ms. West answering questions for the committee on the logistics of identifying and setting attainable goals. With meeting time running out, she advised the members of private/grassroots groups working in the areas the committee has identified as areas of interest and agencies that could provide additional information.

PLANNING FOR THE AUGUST 8TH MEETING

The committee will revisit its priorities (refining if necessary) to establish its scope of work, cull improbable ideas, and select ideas for presentation to the Board of Commissioners on November 22nd. (Post note: The August 8th meeting will be held in the 9th Floor Conference Room of the Macomb County Administration Building, beginning at 7:30 a.m.)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

Prepared by K. Doyle
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